

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 5 and 6 without prejudice to or waiver of the subject matter contained therein.

Please amend Claims 1, 4, 7 and 8, as follows. All claims in the application are being reproduced below in accordance with current U.S. Patent and Trademark Office requirements.

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet folding apparatus for folding a sheet by nipping the sheet taking a predetermined position in a convey direction as a fold and conveying the sheet by means of a pair of folding rollers, wherein at least one of the pair of folding rollers has a single large-diameter portion, provided within a convey range in a sheet width direction of a minimum size sheet foldable in the sheet folding apparatus, and small-diameter portions at both sides of the large-diameter portion, and ~~the single large-diameter portion is provided within a convey range in a sheet width direction of a minimum size sheet foldable in the sheet folding apparatus~~

wherein a gap formed at the small-diameter portion between the pair of folding rollers is smaller than a thickness of the sheet as folded.

2. (Previously Presented) A sheet folding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the single large-diameter portion is provided at a sheet convey center portion of the roller.

3. (Previously Presented) A sheet folding apparatus according to claim 2, wherein a width of the single large-diameter portion in the axis direction is substantially $\frac{1}{2}$ of a minimum width of a sheet size foldable in the sheet folding apparatus.

4. (Currently Amended) A sheet folding apparatus according to claim 3, wherein another ~~single~~ large-diameter portion of the roller is provided outside a width of a maximum-size sheet foldable in the folding apparatus.

Claims 5 and 6 (Cancelled).

7. (Currently Amended) A sheet folding apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ 5, wherein the ~~predetermined~~ gap formed between the pair of folding rollers is set smaller than a thickness of the sheet folded in three sheets ~~conveyed~~.

8. (Currently Amended) A sheet folding apparatus according to claim ~~4~~ 6, wherein the ~~predetermined~~ gap formed between the pair of folding rollers is set smaller than a thickness of the sheet folded in three sheets ~~conveyed~~.

9. (Previously Presented) A sheet folding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the single large-diameter portion has a taper section.

10. (Previously Presented) A sheet folding apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the large-diameter portion has a taper section.

11. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus having image forming means for forming an image on a sheet, sheet conveying means for conveying the sheet on which the image is formed by said image forming means, and a sheet folding apparatus for folding the conveyed sheet by nipping the sheet taking a predetermined position in a convey direction as a fold and conveying the sheet by means of a pair of folding rollers,

wherein at least one of the pair of folding rollers has a single large-diameter portion, provided within a convey range in a sheet width direction of a minimum size sheet foldable in the sheet folding apparatus, and small-diameter portions at both sides of the large-diameter portion, the sheet folding apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 10 and 12

wherein a gap formed at the small-diameter portion between the pair of folding rollers is smaller than a thickness of the sheet as folded.

12. (Previously Presented) A sheet folding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said pair of folding rollers comprise elastic members.

Please add Claims 13-20 as follows:

--13. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the single large-diameter portion is provided at a sheet convey center portion of the roller.

14. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 13, wherein a width of the single large-diameter portion in the axis direction is substantially $\frac{1}{2}$ of a minimum width of a sheet size foldable in the sheet folding apparatus.

15. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein another large-diameter portion of the roller is provided outside a width of a maximum-size sheet foldable in the folding apparatus.

16. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the gap formed between the pair of folding rollers is set smaller than a thickness of the sheet folded in three.

17. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the gap formed between the pair of folding rollers is set smaller than a thickness of the sheet folded in three.

18. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the single large-diameter portion has a taper section.

19. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the large-diameter portion has a taper section.

20. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said pair of folding rollers comprise elastic members.--